

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W
----- 065516 /43

R 200930Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6762
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 3103

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, SS, MR.ML
SUBJECT: EX-SAHARA: CONTINUED POLISARIO INCURSIONS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 3045

1. FOLLOWING UPDATE OF RECENT MILITARY CLASHES BETWEEN MAURITANIAN FORCES
AND POLISARIO GUERRILLAS WAS PROVIDED US BY SPANISH DIPLOMAT ON
17 DECEMBER:

(A) EXPANDING ON INFO REPORTED IN REF, DIPLOMAT SAID THAT ON 7
DECEMBER AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF POLISARIO TROOPS AMBUSHED A
MAURITANIAN COLUMN NEAR AARGUB(2337N1552W), THE COAST CITY WHICH FACES

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DAKHLA. FIFTEEN MAURITANIANS WERE KILLED AND AT LEAST TWICE THAT NUMBER
WOUNDED. GIRM FORCES WERE FORCED TO DISENGAGE AND POLISARIO ATTACKING
FORCE DISAPPEARED INTO DESERT. SPANISH DIPLOMAT DESCRIBED THIS
ATTACK AS MOST SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATION CONDUCTED BY
POLISARIO AGAINST GIRM FORCES IN PAST MONTH.

(B) MAURITANIAN FORCES ROUTED A POLISARIO UNIT THEY SURPRISED NEAR BOU JARTALLA (2142N0934W) ON 10 DECEMBER. GIRM TROOPS COUNTED TWELVE POLISARIO DEAD AFTER ENGAGEMENT, WHILE MAURITANIAN LOSSES WERE DESCRIBED AS LIGHT.

(C) POLISARIO UNITS AND GIRM FORCES CLASHED AGAIN ON 15 DECEMBER AT LOCATION NEAR BEN AMERA (2653N0838W). NO DECISIVE VICTORY WAS REGISTERED ON EITHER SIDE. HOWEVER, POLISARIO FORCE FLED AND COULD NOT BE LOCATED BY PURSUING MAURITANIANS.

2. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD OF POLISARIO EMPLOYING AN AMBUSH AS A MILITARY TACTIC AGAINST MAURITANIAN UNITS. IN RECENT WEEKS POLISARIO HAS TENDED TO RELY ON HIT-AND-RUN GUERRILLA TACTICS OFTEN STRIKING JUST BEFORE DAWN TO NEUTRALIZE MAURITANIAN AIR RECONNAISSANCE AND PURSUIT EFFORTS.

HANDYSIDE

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